

RATIONALE FOR CHANGES IN REGULATIONS

Return to a 60-Day Season for Canvasbacks:

The objective for canvasback management is to maintain a breeding population of at least 500,000. The 2006 breeding population estimate of 691,000 is 33% higher than 2005, 23% above the long-term average, and large enough to support a 60-day season with a 1-bird daily bag limit.

Late Season Duck Hunting Opportunity in 2006:

In response to hunter opinions, the Department pushed season dates back beginning in 2004 to the latest in modern times. The 2006 season dates are similar to those in 2004 and 2005. Each year a random sample of hunters are surveyed to determine hunter opinions about season dates and the week they most prefer to hunt. Eighty-five percent of hunters indicated that their preferred week to hunt was within the dates offered last year. For the first time, more hunters with preferences outside of the current season structure indicated that they preferred to hunt earlier rather than later than the previous season's framework (57% earlier vs. 43% later).

More Late Season Hunting Opportunity for Canada Geese:

For the first time in over a decade, Missouri will not be limited to 40 or fewer days after November 30th and will be allowed a 79 day season. These changes will enable Missouri to set season dates that better coincide with the arrival of migrant Canada geese, offer the same season dates statewide, and eliminate the Southeast Zone. In order to provide more days later in the season, the second Canada goose season segment was eliminated. These changes are the result of an agreement reached by state and federal agencies responsible for Canada goose management in the western portion of the Mississippi Flyway. In an effort to control giant Canada goose numbers, these agencies agreed to allow more liberal Canada goose hunting regulations even if this results in reduced numbers of Eastern Prairie Population (EPP) Canada geese. It is believed that the EPP population may decline, but stabilize at lower levels, as hunters harvest a growing proportion of giant Canada geese. However, if these changes result in too dramatic reductions of EPP Canada geese over the next few years, Missouri and other states in the western portion of the Mississippi Flyway may return to more restrictive regulations.